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AUTHOR	Nelson, James H.
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ABSTRACT

This speech reviews past articulation efforts on the national level, comments on present articulation efforts, and looks ahead to new forces which will probably affect articulation. Past and present efforts discussed included the Knoell-Medsker study, which generated articulation guidelines, Kintzer's "Nationwide Pilot Study on Articulation," and Willingham's "The Number 2 Access Problem: Transfer to the Upper Division." To improve articulation, Willingham recommended the creation of statewide monitoring agencies, which would make articulation at the local level even more essential. Forces to compel progress toward better articulation are: (1) concerned legislators; (2) emancipated students; (3) new forms of higher education; (4) an increase in influence and numbers of upper level colleges; (5) more liberal accrediting associations; (6) more state agencies for coordination; and (7) increased interest of senior colleges in junior college transfers. It was concluded that the original goal of articulation, enabling students to move through transfer programs with a minimum loss of time and disruption of study, is of utmost importance. (RN)

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"NEW CHALLENGES IN ARTICULATION"

Keynote Address

Thirty-ninth Annual Meeting

of the

UPPER MIDWEST ASSOCIATION
of
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and
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University of North Dakota

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by

James H. Nelson
Battelle Fellow and Professor
Administration and Higher Education
Michigan State University

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
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"NEW CHALLENGES IN ARTICULATION"

By far, the most comprehensive and thorough study of the articulation problems and processes associated with the transfer of students from two to four-year colleges and universities was conducted nearly a decade ago by Dorothy Knoell and Leland Medsker at the Center for the Study of Higher Education in Berkeley, California. Because of its landmark status, that study warrants a review here as backdrop to an examination of articulation practices today and a comment or two about prospects for articulation in the years immediately ahead. My purpose, then, in the next few minutes, is to review, in broad strokes, past articulation efforts on the national level, comment upon the present state of the art in our articulation efforts, and finally attempt to look ahead to new forces which promise to influence future articulation significantly.

Let me begin with a review of the Knoell-Medsker Study. One of the most important developments for improvement of articulation occurred in 1957 when a joint committee on Junior and Senior Colleges was established by the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of Junior Colleges. As most of you know, the parent organization of this group meeting here today, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, was also represented on that committee after its first year of operation. Out of this Committee's efforts in 1958, a tentative statement of principles or guidelines was formulated which dealt with the following major areas of articulation: 1) equality of treatment of the native and transfer students; 2) acceptance of transfer credit; 3) continuing study and reporting; 4) communication; and 5) the desirability of increasing the proportion of upper division students in the four-year colleges in relation to lower division enrollments. This statement was approved by the three sponsoring associations but was regarded only as an intermediate step until such time as a thorough study could be made of the characteristics and performance of transfer students, along with a systematic analysis of articulation practice and policy, in a broad sampling of institutions.

The Joint Committee wisely recognized that it could not conduct such a study itself and the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Berkeley was asked to formulate an appropriate research proposal, secure the funding and carry out the research. The resulting study involved 7,243 junior college students who transferred in the fall of 1960 to 43 four-year colleges and universities in ten states. The transfer students represented a total of 345 two-year institutions, although the vast majority came from a comparatively small number of two-year colleges. The ten states participating in the study, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington, were selected beacuse of their major commitment to community college education and because, collectively, these states represented most, if not all, of the major types or models of articulation then in existence. I should add that in addition to the 7000 plus junior college transfers, the Knoell-Medsker study focused on two other groups of students selected in the spring of 1962 from rosters of baccalaureate degree candidates at the participating four-year colleges. One of these groups was comprised of 3,352 native students who entered college in 1958 or earlier and the other group consisted of 1,181 junior college transfers who had transferred prior to 1960.

As you could surmise from the scope of this study, it generated a tremendous amount of potentially useful information about the transfer process and articulation problems associated with it. In recognition of this fact, a small grant was obtained from the ESSO Education Foundation for the purpose of extracting, refining and disseminating research findings from the study which seemed to hold particular promise for the improvement of articulation between the two and four-year colleges and universities. The process by which research findings were transformed into general articulation guidelines was a series of conferences - one in each of the ten participating states - at which preliminary guideline statements based upon the Knoell-Medsker research data were examined, discussed and, in some instances, modified.

I would like now to comment upon the resulting guideline statement. What were the guidelines that emerged from the Knoell-Medsker study and to what degree have they been followed in the ten participating states? I won't attempt to recount fully the guidelines which were published by the American Council on Education with the endorsement of AACRAO, AAJC and AAC. They were widely distributed by ACE and each of the three sponsoring associations and most of those present today have probably heard of this document. However, because it reflects the spirit of articulation at its best (in my opinion), I would like to describe the purpose of the guidelines as set out in the introduction on page 5 of this booklet. I quote:

> The major purpose of the Guidelines is to provide a framework within which junior and senior colleges, singly and cooperatively, can develop specific policies governing transfer between and among institutions. The Guidelines are not intended to be a substitute for local and state policies, but instead, a set of principles against which the appropriateness of particular policies can be tested. If the Guidelines are effective in accomplishing this purpose, a situation will be attained in each state whereby students will be able to move through transfer programs with a minimum loss of time and disruption of study. At the same time, individual junior and senior colleges will have a reasonable degree of autonomy in matters of curriculum and standards.

Undoubtedly, many of those who invested their efforts in some aspect of developing these guidelines dealing with the broad areas of admissions, evaluation of transfer courses, curriculum planning, advising/counseling/ student personnel services, and articulation models have wondered whether any of it made any difference. What guidelines were implemented by whom and to what extent?

For a partial answer to this question, let us consider the Kintzer Study. Until Fred Kintzer at UCLA published his Nationwide Pilot Study on Articulation as "Topical Paper Number 15" of the ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges, the only answer to this question was conjecture. Depending upon what part of the country one came from, he might think that the guidelines were having a definite positive impact (as in Illinois) or that there was no discernable impact (as in numerous other states). In commenting upon the significance of the Nationwide Pilot Study, Kintzer cites the tremendous growth which has characterized both community college enrollments and transfers to senior colleges and universities. At the time of his writing (1970), approximately 60% of the full time student body in the SUNY system was enrolled in two-year colleges. For the fall of 1970, Kintzer reports that over 90% of all freshmen enrolled in the California public higher educational system were in the State's ninety-six community colleges. For the state of Florida, at that time, two out of every three beginning students were enrolling in community colleges. Since many of those entering the community colleges expected to transfer, clearly the matter of providing for smooth and effective articulation deserved serious attention. It is surprising, therefore, that as recently as 1970 when Kintzer's study was published, the improvement of articulation still did not seem to receive high priority. Addressing himself to this point, Kintzer states:

> Efforts to provide systematically for the transfer student have not kept pace with the tremendous increase of community college transfer enrollments. Plans are noted in scattered areas of the country, but usually in single districts or institutions rather than in regions or in states where the pressure is the greatest. Only a handful of states have developed plans for effective transfer. This situation has improved little since Knoell and Medsker made their comprehensive nationwide study in 1963-64.

Kintzer also observed that Allan Hurlburt in his study of State Master Plans for COMMUNITY COLLEGES noted a complete absence of transfer policies and procedures. The failure to utilize the vehicle of master plans to establish priorities and safeguard coordination of higher education on a statewide basis is viewed by Kintzer as a critically important ommission. It is his feeling, and one with which I heartily concur, that the community colleges and their prospective transfer students will remain in an untenable position if systematic statewide solutions to articulation are not quickly developed. For those of you who may not have seen Kintzer's Pilot Study Report, the bulk of the publication consists of summaries of articulation efforts in the fifty states, which in a number of instances, were surely provided by members of this audience. I might add that a national study of articulation for which this Pilot Study was the forerunner is now underway and Kintzer is directing it. A final report will be published in about two years. Kintzer is also writing a book on articulation which will be published soon by Jossey-Bass.

I would like to turn now to a very recent report on articulation entitled, The Number 2 Access Problem: Transfer to the Upper Division. In the interest of time, I am jumping over several other studies of articulation to comment for a few minutes on this recent publication authored by Warren Willingham. For those of you who may not have seen this report, it was prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education and published by the American Association for Higher Education in July, 1972 One section of Willingham's publication is entitled "After the Guidelines" and in it he describes an effort to determine to what extent the 43 senior institutions participating in the Knoell-Medsker study presently adhere to the policies and procedures reflected in the Guidelines. To accomplish this he derived 16 statements from the Guidelines which were then presented by telephone interviews to representatives of the 43 participating senior colleges and universities. They were asked whether they do or do not follow each of these specific guidelines. Because this phase of Willingham's study provides some current concrete evidence of the adherence (or lack of adherence) to these guidelines at the institutional level, I would like to take a few minutes to present the 16 guideline statements and cite for each, the percent of the 43 surveyed institutions which are following it:

Admissions

1. Transfers are typically admitted by the beginning of their last term in the junior college. 35%
2. If space for transfers who have completed two years of junior college is limited, priority goes to applicants with the highest probability of success. 37%
3. Transfer applicants from new colleges within the state are admitted on the same basis as those from accredited institutions. 63%
4. Each year community colleges are provided information on the performance of their former students. 49%

Credit

5. Transfer students have the option of satisfying graduation requirements in effect at the time they entered the community college as freshmen. 55%
6. Satisfactory completion of an associate degree transfer program guarantees upper division standing at the time of transfer. 51%
7. Credit granted on the basis of CLEP scores is transferable. 63%
8. D grades earned by transfer students are evaluated on the same basis as grades earned by native students. 83%

Articulation

9. The admissions staff visits the primary feeder junior colleges at least twice each year. 42%
10. Personnel from the primary feeder colleges visit the campus at least once a year to talk with former students. 35%
11. There is an annual joint review of what courses are accepted in satisfaction of specific requirements and agreements are communicated in writing to advisors, counselors, faculty, etc. 50%
12. The institution has done formal studies of transfer students during the past year (other than reporting grades to junior colleges). 42%

Guidance and Financial Aid

13. Junior college personnel meet regularly on the campus to discuss services available to students after transfer (financial aid, guidance, remedial programs, etc.). 50%

14. Special materials and procedures have been developed for the orientation of transfers (separate from freshmen). 42%
15. Proportionately, as many transfer students as freshmen receive financial aid. 42%
16. Application procedures, deadlines, or qualifications do not make it more difficult for transfers to receive aid. 66%

In commenting on his findings, Willingham states:

> On the average, these 43 institutions follow about half of the guidelines listed here. But there is considerable institutional variability. Within particular types of institutions, (Willingham grouped the 43 institutions by type into Major State Universities, Teacher Colleges, Other State Institutions and Private/Technical Institutions), some colleges adhere to most of these guidelines and others adhere to few. This variability is frequently found even among public institutions within the same state. Furthermore, there is little apparent connection between the number of transfers an institution admits and the extent to which it follows these guidelines.

It is interesting to note that when asked by Willingham what changes or trends these institutions expected in the area of articulation, most respondents reported that they expected little change.

Out of his study, Willingham comes up with two sets of recommendations which, if implemented, he believes would improve articulation. One set is addressed to states lacking a voluntary or legislated agency to monitor articulation. Like Kintzer, and Knoell and Medsker before him, Willingham believes that the creation of such statewide agencies is vital to effective articulation. The second set of recommendations pertains to articulation at the local institutional level which he feels is more, rather than less, essential with the creation of statewide monitoring agencies.

Before leaving Willingham's study to comment upon some of the forces which seem likely to change the articulation landscape, perhaps you would like to know the meaning of the title he gave his report, The Number Two Access Problem: Transfer to the Upper Division. Of this he says:

> There are three main reasons why the movement of students from junior to senior colleges rivals freshman admissions as the second most important problem in access to higher education. One is the critical relationship to the organization of higher education. Smooth transfer from two to four-year institutions is a basic requirement of the hierarchical model in which community colleges serve to expand educational opportunity. A second reason is the growing magnitude of transfer admissions. Rough estimates indicate that one transfer student enters a senior institution for every three freshmen; of these transfers, over half come from two-year institutions. A third reason is the fact that transfer admissions includes a number of unique problems, quite different from freshmen admissions.

So much for the quick review of the past and present status of articulation. I would like now to indulge in a forecast concerning the future of articulation. I suppose one could become a bit pessimistic or cynical (or both) in reflecting upon the lack of progress we have made in solving our two-year/four-year college articulation problems as documented by Kintzer and Willingham. Of course, some progress has been made and a few states have achieved great strides. But taken as a whole, apparently we aren't far advanced from the articulation level reported by Knoell and Medsker nearly a decade ago. Why has there been so little change?

In attempting to answer this question, I have tried to apply a simplified sort of force field analysis as a diagnostic technique. That is, I have tried to identify some of the existing forces that should result in improved articulation if there were no counter forces blunting them. Certainly, the nationwide efforts of AACRAO, AAJC, (now AACJC) and AAC would seem to be examples of forces impelling us toward better articulation.

The guidelines emerging from the Knoell-Medsker study, the Kintzer studies, the Willingham studies and other similar efforts would seem to constitute forces pushing us toward improved articulation. And of primary importance as a positive force is the good work done by people on the firing lines in the individual institutions people like yourselves. Clearly, there are forces operative that have the potential to improve articulation. But there are some restraining forces at work, too. What are they?

For openers, we might consider institutional integrity - you know, that feeling that you'll be damned if you're going to have another institution dictating who you will admit, on what terms, etc. A similar reaction is often expressed by faculty who interpret some thrusts of articulation as encroachments upon their academic prerogatives to decide what to teach and how to teach it. Then of course, there is the old problem of top level commitment (really lack of it) within institutions and within states which is essential to the realization of good articulation. Manpower is required to solve many articulation problems and lack of it has certainly been a restraining force.

Needless to say, there are other impelling and restraining forces which need not be identified here to illustrate the point I wish to make. My point is simply that these forces constitute a dynamic field and the fact that little progress seems to have been made does not signify a static condition. Rather, it suggests to me that a near equilibrium of impelling and restraining forces has been reached; hence, little progress is being achieved.

If this analysis of the situation is valid, then one could expect to achieve progress toward better articulation by creating a disequilibrium through the addition of greater impelling forces. And that is exactly what I believe is about to happen. Let me identify for you what I see as a few of those new forces:

1. Legislators everywhere are greatly concerned about the mounting costs of higher education, they are not kindly disposed toward waste or slippage wherever they find it.
2. Students are emancipated today, they do not hesitate to challenge institutional authority, including use of legal action.

3. New forms of higher education are finding increasing acceptance (University Without Walls; Empire State University in New York; Minnesota's Metropolitan State College; The External Degree; CLEP; etc.)
4. Upper level colleges are increasing in number and influence.
5. The NCHEMS is working on the development of educational outcome measures and other useful tools.
6. Accrediting associations are becoming more liberal in their treatment of non-traditional studies.
7. State agencies for coordination of higher education are on the ascendance, it seems just a matter of time until they move in on articulation.
8. The market place has changed dramatically, senior colleges and universities are interested in junior college transfers, indeed, actively competing for them.

I believe these forces will break the equilibrium, that we are on the threshold of some dramatic changes and that we can anticipate significant improvement in articulation within this decade. In light of the major forces now confronting us, it would appear to me that some of the minor points we pursue in our articulation skirmishes (the quest for equilavency, in particular) are just a bit like the art of arranging deck chairs on the Titantic - it may turn out to make little difference.

Perhaps we need to ask ourselves whether we have lost sight of the original goal of articulation, that is, to attain a situation whereby students will be able to move through transfer programs with a minimum loss of time and disruption of study. Should we stray too far from this objective, I feel certain that we, too, are going to encounter an iceberg.

Thank You.